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BOOK REVIEWS.

MAN'S PLACE IN THE COSMOS, and other Essays. By Professor Andrew Seth. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1897.

Some of these essays have already been published in "Blackwood's Magazine," the "Contemporary Review," and elsewhere. The essay, however, entitled "The 'New' Psychology and Automatism" is here published for the first time, and is well worthy of the place assigned to it along with the brilliant article on Huxley's "Romanes Lecture," which opens the book, and the important criticism of Mr. Bradley's "Appearance and Reality," which occupies the middle of it.

The title and table of contents suggest metaphysical rather than ethical discussions, and would hardly seem to justify any extended notice in this JOURNAL, but the circumstance to which the author appeals in his preface as giving unity to these essays also indicates their importance for ethics. The view of the Cosmos here set forth rests, we are told, "upon a conviction of the absolute value of the ethical life." In order to understand the world we must take our stand upon Mind and Will. "Man as rational and in virtue of self-conscious reason the free shaper of his own destiny furnishes us with our only indefeasible standard of value." And again: "Inexplicable in a sense as man's personal agency is, nay, the one perpetual miracle, it is nevertheless our surest datum, and our only clue to the mystery of existence." While seeming to be only distantly concerned with the science of ethics, these essays thus touch it at a vital point,—the point at which the problem of the reality of will and self-conscious intelligence emerges.

The first essay shows with much literary grace that while Professor Huxley, in contrast to some other "naturalists," is undoubtedly right in emphasizing the distinction between nature and morality,—between action which is determined by forces which act as a *vis a tergo* and action determined by conscious purpose,—he is wrong in supposing that this distinction is an ultimate and impossible one or that "the cosmic process has no sort of relation to moral ends." How can nature be said to be indifferent to moral purpose when it has directed all its forces to produce it?

"Nature is made better by no means,
But nature makes that means."

Instead, therefore, of saying that upon naturalistic suppositions morality is inexplicable, we ought to say that nature itself is inexplicable except upon the presupposition of morality. Mr. Leslie Stephen and Mr. Herbert Spencer have already shown that human morality is foreshadowed in the natural life of the animals. Professor Seth goes further: morality is not only an element in cosmic life, it is the reality of it. We can only understand the part in relation to the whole; we can only understand the process of evolution in the light of the end of self-conscious personality towards which it has been making.

The essay on the New Psychology aims at showing that Münsterberg's philosophical conclusions from the subtle analysis to which he subjects the psychical and physiological accompaniments of volition are really a *petitio principii*. We may admit that there is no element of "content" in the mind corresponding to what we call volition without admitting that the mind consists merely of content (presentations and ideas) and feeling. As a matter of fact, those who hold that the soul is a centre of self-determining activity found their contention not upon the existence of a special kind of sensation,—call it sense of innervation or what not (to do so would indeed be to resolve will into presentation and give up the whole point),—but upon the impossibility of explaining the facts of our mental and moral life except upon the supposition of a third element over and above ideas and feelings. Perhaps Professor Seth hardly does justice to the service that Münsterberg and others have done in bringing out this point, and thus placing the issue upon its proper basis. Yet he is undoubtedly right in his contention that as the controversy now stands Münsterberg's argument does not seem to deserve the respect it has received from Mr. Bradley and other English philosophers.

In the criticism of Mr. Bradley's "New Theory of the Absolute," Professor Seth calls attention to the double strain that runs through Mr. Bradley's work on "Appearance and Reality." He shows that sometimes the emphasis falls upon "appearance." Things as we know them are mere appearance. Reality falls on the side of the absolute. The divisions and determinations which we make are the result of abstract thought (Spinoza's imagination), nothing is real but as it is taken up in the absolute. At other times

Mr. Bradley remembers that appearances have each their own degree of reality in virtue of the extent to which they have attained to inner harmony. Following the former of these paths, he tends to fall back into the "pit of undifferentiated substance out of which Hegel dug philosophy." Only in following the latter does he put himself in line with the later and sounder developments of idealist philosophy. But even on his idealist or Hegelian side, Mr. Bradley, according to Professor Seth, leaves a good deal to be desired. For when he comes to define for us the nature of the absolute itself as representing the highest degree of reality, he gives us nothing but negatives. It is non-personal, non-moral, non-volitional, non-intellectual. The best way of conceiving of it is not in terms of our highest, but of our lowest experience,—the undifferentiated feeling with which our soul's life begins rather than in the self-conscious will and intelligence which is its goal. This new form of agnosticism Professor Seth condemns, in spite of its saving clauses, on the ground that our intellectual and moral life rests upon the belief in the reality of the ideals of knowledge and goodness, and nothing can be metaphysically satisfactory which throws doubt upon it.

So far we may agree with him in his criticism of the Spinozistic and agnostic tendency of Mr. Bradley's speculations, but he seems to stand on more doubtful ground when, turning to certain false prophets of Hegelianism who seem to him to identify too directly the human with the divine, man's limited experience with the absolute, Professor Seth seeks to draw a distinction in the interest of the transcendence of the absolute between the "Absolute in itself," which with all modern idealists he rejects, and the "Absolute-for-itself" which he thinks must be retained. As against Bradley, he maintains that we know reality in knowing the world; as against these false teachers, he maintains that in knowing reality we do not know it as God knows it, and therefore cannot in any sense *be* God.

Putting aside the view that no Hegelian now holds (did any one ever hold it?) that our human consciousness exhausts the being of Him in whom all fulness dwells, the question at issue is whether the form of consciousness which is represented by the best moments of human experience is one which does or does not admit us into the mind and will of God? Do we at such moments really become one with God as all the mystics have believed, or are we still in the outer sanctuary of what is merely human? Professor Seth's distinction of an absolute-for-itself, which is never an absolute for us, would seem to imply that the latter is the true answer. Yet, if this is the case,

in what respect are we better off for the substitution of this new Unknown for the old one? Reality must surely be the world as it is to God, and if in these highest moments of insight we do not in some sense enter into his mind and become one with him, it is difficult to say in what sense we can be said to know Reality at all. It is right and necessary to maintain the transcendence of the absolute reality, but is it necessary, in order to do so, to reassert, in however modified a form, the dualisms out of which as well as out of Spinozistic Pantheism it is the merit of Hegel to have dug philosophy?

Those who are inclined to fall back into this dualism will do well to remember the fine sentence in Jowett's Biography, "Be not deceived. God is not other than He is seen to be in this world, if we rightly understand the indications that he gives of Himself."

The volume closes with an essay on "Mr. Balfour and his Critics." Frankly, this essay seems to the present writer unfortunate. To one who had less sympathy with Professor Seth's general point of view than he has, it might even suggest that the author's heart is not after all in the philosophy of which he is elsewhere so brilliant an exponent. The indulgence with which the "Foundations of Belief" is treated, coming after the strict account demanded of Mr. Bradley's "Appearance and Reality," suggests uncomfortably that Mr. Balfour may steal a horse while the Hegelian may not look over the wall. It has been said of Green's method as applied to Hume that it would have sufficed to have pulled any philosophy to pieces. One might say of the method that Professor Seth here employs that it would suffice to put any fragments together into a consistent philosophy. *Sympathetic* criticism we all understand. It consists in the attempt to do justice to a great writer by developing the principles he has clearly conceived and which constitute the body of his teaching with greater consistency than he himself has been able to do. But the species of criticism illustrated in this defence is something quite different. Here the inconsistencies of a radically unsound writer are passed over; isolated expressions are emphasized, and the misuse of terms explained (as Lamb explained Coleridge's metaphysics), as Mr. Balfour's pun, all with the object of showing that he is not so bad as his idealist critics make out, and that by looking a little deeper they may be convinced that he really meant the same as they do themselves. It would indeed be surprising if so able and alert a mind as Mr. Balfour's had remained wholly untouched by ideas which since the time of Kant have been the commonplaces of the schools.

But to say that he reflects these ideas in single passages is one thing, to claim that critics like the late William Wallace, Mr. Bosanquet, and Principal Fairbairn have one and all been mistaken as to the main drift of his contentions, is quite another. When we hear that Mr. Balfour has performed the remarkable feat of working his way from a different starting-point and by a different route to a fundamental agreement with Kant and Hegel, we put it down to the friendly bias of an indulgent critic; but when we further find the great philosophy of the *Kritiques* contrasted as a clumsy and pedantic structure veiled in mediæval obscurity (p. 279) with the light grace and convincing lucidity of the English essayist, the reader will be inclined to ask whether for the moment Professor Seth has not mistaken the picturesque pool among the rocks with its pretty shells and sea-weeds for the great sea which has left it there. It is possible, of course, to prefer the clearness and shallowness of the one to the depth and mystery of the other, but Professor Seth would be the first under other circumstances to condemn so superficial a taste.

With regard to the general contention of Mr. Balfour's book, we may agree with Professor Seth that the test of philosophic truth is that it works; in other words, that life as we know it, or as in our best moments we should wish it to be, can be built upon it. But prior to the application of this test, we must ask ourselves what is life as we know it, and what is it that as human beings we require that it should be. It is because Mr. Balfour applies it without any serious attempt to answer these preliminary questions that his critics find his results so unsatisfactory, and refuse to see underneath his brilliant paradoxes any important contribution to philosophy.

J. H. MUIRHEAD.

LONDON.

ΛΟΓΙΑ ΙΗΣΟΥ. SAYINGS OF OUR LORD. From an Early Greek Papyrus Discovered and Edited, with Translation and Commentary, by Bernard P. Grenfell, M.A., sometime Craven Fellow in the University of Oxford, Fellow of Queen's College; and Arthur S. Hunt, M.A., sometime Craven Fellow in the University of Oxford, Senior Demy of Magdalen College. With two plates. Published for the Egyptian Exploration Fund by Henry Frowde, Amen Corner, London, E. C., 1897. 8vo. Pp. 20.

This pamphlet, containing the eight "sayings of Jesus," recently discovered at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, is a model of conscienc-